

Application No. 10/692,204
Amendment dated March 31, 2005
Reply to Office Action of December 7, 2004
Attorney Docket No. 4384-032517

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the December 7, 2004 Office Action and amends claims 1, 18, 20, cancels claims 14, 16, 17, and 19, and adds new claims 21-23. The Examiner is thanked for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4-6, 13, and 14.

In the December 7, 2004 Office Action, claims 18-20 were objected to for certain misspellings and informalities. Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, for indefiniteness for the use of the phrase "such railroad car" in the last line of independent claim 1. The Applicant has addressed these objections and rejections in the foregoing amendments and request reconsideration thereof.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) for anticipation by United States Patent No. 6,374,749 to Duncan et al. Claims 1-3, 7-12, and 15-17 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) for obviousness over Duncan in view of United States Patent No. 4,915,031 to Wiebe. Applicant's foregoing amendments are believed to render these rejections moot.

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the indicated allowable subject matter from claim 14 and cancelled claim 14. Likewise, claim 18 was amended to include the indicated allowable subject matter of cancelled claim 19. Claims 16 and 17 are further cancelled in the foregoing amendments. In view of the cancellation of claims 16 and 17 and the amendments made to independent claims 1 and 18, Applicant believes the previous rejections of independent claims 1 and 18 are now moot. Claim 20 was amended for proper dependency from amended independent claim 18. Applicant reserves the right to file a continuation application on the subject matter claimed in the original claims 1, 16, and 17.

Additionally, Applicant has added new claims 21-23. New independent claim 21 is a combination of original claims 1 and 4, which was indicated as being allowable over the

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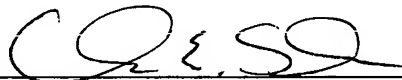
prior art of record in the Office Action. Claims 22 and 23 depend directly or indirectly from new independent claim 21 and are similar to original claims 5 and 6. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 21-23 are in condition for allowance in addition to claims 1-13, 15, 18, and 20.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 1-13, 15, 18, and 20-23 are in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

WEBB ZIESENHEIM LOGSDON
ORKIN & HANSON, P.C.

By



Christian E. Schuster
Registration No. 43,908
Attorney for Applicants
700 Koppers Building
436 Seventh Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219-1818
Telephone: 412-471-8815
Facsimile: 412-471-4094